

EASTBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY 2003-2006 POLICY FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The Audit Commission uses the concept of Environmental Stewardship to assess how well local authorities protect the environment and deliver measurable environmental gain. They recommend that an integrated and structured approach should be adopted towards stewardship with the specification of targets and monitoring.

Within the context of this document the term "Environmental Stewardship" is employed in accordance with the 2001 Best Value Review of Local Agenda 21 recommendation that it be used to cover those Council services impacting on the environment:

- Cleansing Services
- Energy Conservation
- Water Quality & Conservation
- Air Pollution
- Transport
- Land Management
- Planning Management
- Procurement

This document relates to Borough Council services only and is designed to identify and bring together the services the Council undertakes which have a direct impact on the environment, and to provide an environmental policy framework for the development of a comprehensive Environmental Strategy in line with the Audit Commission example.

The eventual Environmental Strategy will be incorporated into the Local Community Strategy enabling the Council and its partners to deliver service improvement through coordinated action and will lay the foundation for sustainability best practice throughout the wider community. The policy statements and actions in this document are drawn from service plans and best value reviews, and the document is designed to be read in conjunction with the relevant service plans and best value reviews.

BACKGROUND

The Best Value Review of Local Agenda 21 and Energy Advice reported to the Borough Council Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2001. One of the proposals contained in the report was that the Council produce and implement an Environmental Stewardship strategy. This recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 18 April 2001. Following approval of Cabinet the post of Environmental Co-ordinator was created and filled.

On 24 June 2002 community stakeholders and stakeholder organisations were invited to attend a one-day seminar at King's Centre, Eastbourne, where they were asked what in the Borough environment they valued, their vision for the future, and any projects they felt might help to achieve their vision. Subsequently, key findings were published in the local newspaper and residents were invited to put their views. The single issue which took overall priority was a call for a comprehensive household waste recycling system. A range of other concerns emerged which covered the full scope of Council activities from housing to the provision of a nature reserve.

The Eastbourne Borough Council Environmental Stewardship Strategy Policy Framework is a first step in seeking to address government requirements and local concerns.

CLEANSING SERVICES

Waste Collection

Eastbourne Borough Council is a Waste Collection Authority (WCA) that collected 31,600 tonnes of waste in the year ended 31st March 2002, most of which went to two landfill sites at Beddingham near Lewes and Pebsham near Hastings run by East Sussex County Council, which is the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA).

The Borough has enjoyed one of the cheapest waste collection services in the country over the last few years but the results of the residents' survey of 2000/2001 reflected the outcomes of the Environmental Community Forum in June 2002 and subsequent wider newspaper consultation in that there was a relatively low satisfaction rating with the service and recognition of the importance of recycling and waste minimisation.

Following a Best Value Review in 2001 the specification was written for a new waste collection contract due to start in April 2003. The specification sought to improve on the waste reduction and the diversion of waste from landfill by the introduction of a wheeled bin household waste collection and recycling service, bringing street cleansing in line with the Environment Protection Act standard for litter collection and extending the street cleansing frequency sweep to include the all streets in the Borough.

Policy Statement: The Council will seek to reduce waste arisings

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Institute a programme of publicity and education which emphasises the importance of reduction in the waste hierarchy	Head of Amenities	Ongoing
Provide wheeled bins throughout the Borough	Head of Amenities	Commencing April 2003

Encourage home composting through the provision of reduced rate composters	Recycling Officer	Ongoing
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Recycling

New revised government targets were introduced by the DETR in the publication Waste Strategy 2000. In order to achieve the national recycling rate of 27% by 2005/06 East Sussex needs to double its waste recycling rate by 2003/04 to 18%. Eastbourne is required to achieve 12% by 2003/04 and 18% by 2005/06.

Policy Statement: The Council will seek to achieve Government waste recycling targets

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Introduce either a weekly or fortnightly boundary recyclable materials collection service	Head of Amenities	April 2003
Increase the number of Bring Sites in the Borough so 100% of residents are within 1 kilometre of a site	Recycling Officer	Ongoing
Actively promote recycling within the community	Recycling Officer	Ongoing
Institute a programme of school visits to educate young people of the importance of recycling and waste minimisation	Recycling Officer	Ongoing

Abandoned Vehicles

The number of abandoned vehicles increases year on year. The Council has developed a number of partnerships to improve the removal of vehicles and reduce the number of vehicles being abandoned on the highway. A new protocol has been introduced with Sussex Police to determine whether a vehicle has a current keeper. Through negotiation East Sussex County Council has continued to fast track abandoned vehicles to breakers rather than store them at the Council's Household Waste site in St Phillip's Avenue. In partnership with the Police DVLA and ESCC the Council conducted a Hot Spot exercise focused on locations of

particular concern. A new performance indicator has been introduced with a target of the removal of 85% of abandoned vehicles within 21 days of their having been reported. Presently the Council achieves 84%. The Council will seek to achieve 85% in 2002/2003.

Policy Statement: The Council will achieve the Government abandoned vehicle target

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Remove 85% of abandoned vehicles from the highway within 21 days of it being reported	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Ongoing
Seek alternative methods to improve on effectiveness and efficiency of the service	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Ongoing

Street Sweeping

The 2000/2001 Best Value Review of Cleansing Services recommended that street cleansing and litter bin emptying should be flexible enough to focus on areas where seasonal demands are made, specifically outside schools during term time and along the Seafront during the Summer season. Continuous monitoring and rescheduling has taken place concentrating on priority areas.

Presently all autumn leaf fall goes to landfill because of its contamination with litter. The streets where leaf fall will occur are easily identifiable and could be swept in anticipation of leaf fall enabling seasonal leaf fall to be composted along with other Council green waste arisings.

Policy Statement: The Council will continue to provide an environment of a 'high' or 'acceptable' standard of cleanliness

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Continue with monitoring and rescheduling in order to maintain high standards of cleanliness	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Ongoing

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Council Buildings

Eastbourne Borough Council spends in excess of £1/2m annually on the supply of energy much of which is used on the lighting and heating of buildings. Office equipment uses approximately 25% of total electricity consumption.

Policy Statement: The Council will increase energy efficiency levels in Council buildings

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Conduct initial energy audits in Council buildings to enable benchmarking of energy consumption	Energy Initiatives Officer	2002/2003
Conduct an assessment of office equipment used in Council buildings and set realistic efficiency targets	Energy Initiatives Officer	2002/2003

Housing Energy

During 1999/2000 a Home Energy Efficiency Survey was completed and a multi-agency Energy Strategy Steering Group was set up. New double glazing windows were fitted to 117 Council homes, new or upgraded central heating installed in 151 Council homes and energy saving works carried out on 62 Council homes.

Policy statement: The Council will increase housing energy efficiency in all tenures

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Promote energy awareness through the Energy Matters School Education programme	Energy Initiatives Officer	Ongoing
Produce an Affordable Warmth Strategy	Energy Initiatives Officer	2002/2003
Upgrade energy efficiency of Council homes	Energy Initiatives Officer	Ongoing

WATER QUALITY & CONSERVATION

The Environment Agency is primarily responsible for maintaining or improving the quality of fresh, marine, surface and underground water in England and Wales. The Drinking Water Inspectorate, or DWI, has overall interests for the quality of water in our taps, but Local Authority Environmental Health Departments have local responsibility.

Policy Statement: The Council will continue to ensure that water quality is maintained

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Sample mains water monthly	Pollution Services Team	Ongoing

The majority of water inefficiency occurs in toilets and washing facilities. For example, the Sovereign Centre consumes on average 488,000 ltrs/week of which only 19% is for the pools whilst the remaining 81% is used for showers, toilets, washing the centre, catering etc. Simple conservation solutions can be quite dramatic. For example, fill/flush urinal cisterns that fill and flush four times an hour, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days, can use up to 300,000 litres of water a year. A passive infra-red urinal management system will save over 10% of that. Fitting push taps in showers and wash basins, and "hippos" in toilet cisterns, would also significantly increase efficiency.

Policy Statement: The Council will seek to increase water efficiency in all its buildings

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Introduce water efficiency measures such as push taps, low flow shower heads, urinal PIR management systems and cistern hippos throughout the Council	Group Administration Manager	2002/2005

AIR POLLUTION

In Eastbourne the quality of the air is a high priority. Monitoring is continuous for fine particulate matter, on a daily average basis for sulphur dioxide and monthly average basis for nitrogen dioxide. The Council completed an Air Quality Review and Assessment in June 2000. The next is scheduled for completion in March 2003.

Policy Statement: The Council will protect public health by the continued monitoring and policing of air quality throughout the Borough

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale

Monitor fine particulate (PM ₁₀) levels, smoke and SO ₂ levels and NO ₂ levels and make information available to the public	Pollution Services Team	Ongoing
Gather information for next Air Quality Review and Assessment	Pollution Services Team	Completion by March 2003
Respond to service requests concerning air quality	Pollution Services Team	Ongoing

TRANSPORT

EBC Staff Travel

Following a survey of staff travel habits in June 2002 an Eastbourne Borough Council Green Travel Plan was drafted and presented to Corporate Management Team where it was approved on 28 October 2002 to go forward for staff consultation.

Policy Statement: The Council will seek to reduce its employees use of fossil fuels

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Send the EBC Green Transport out to Council staff for consultation	Environmental Coordinator	2002/2003
Seek to have the final draft of the EBC GTP adopted by the Council	Environmental Coordinator	2003/2004

Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plan

The Borough Council in partnership with East Sussex County Council has developed the Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plan (EUALTP) which sets out proposals for the delivery of integrated transport over a five year period in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Government's 1998 Transport White Paper. The EUALTP seeks to improve alternatives to the car, change travel behaviour, manage demand, restrain unnecessary car trips and enhance the environment.

The component strategies with the EUALTP cover a wide range of topics including public transport, cycling, traffic management, people with impaired mobility, taxis and private hire cars, parking, air and noise pollution, and townscape.

Policy Statement: The Council will ensure that all measures implemented under the EUALTP and by the Highways Agency meet sustainable development criteria

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Work with partners to deliver sustainable transport and traffic management for the Borough	Director of Planning, Regeneration and Amenities	2002/2006

Car Parking

The 1991 Road Traffic Act made provision for local authorities to become responsible for the enforcement of parking on the public highway. An effective parking policy is essential if Eastbourne is to retain its position as a leading resort, sub-regional shopping centre, conference and commercial centre.

Policy Statement: The Council will pursue an effective parking policy for the Borough

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Work with partners to develop a sustainable parking regime for the Borough	Director of Planning, Regeneration and Amenities	2002/2004

LAND MANAGEMENT

The Council owns and manages 1700 hectares (4200 acres) of Downland that receives no herbicide, pesticide or fertiliser and includes four farms, chalk downland and areas of woodland. It also owns and manages the parks, gardens and open amenity areas within the Borough, and manages the grass verges and trees on the highways on behalf of East Sussex County, the Highways Authority.

Open Downland

The Eastbourne Downland Estate is divided into 1199 hectares (2963 acres) of farmed land and 490 hectares (1211 acres) of land which is open to public access. At the eastern end of the South Downs is a renowned coastal headland known as Beachy Head and is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Large areas of downland are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). 696 hectares (1721 acres) are designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area.

Policy Statement: The Council will protect and enhance the Eastbourne Downland

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Maintain the diversity of wildlife habitats and their species whilst allowing for a wide variety of recreation where it does not conflict with ecological habitat, archaeological features or farming	Downland, Trees and Woodland Manager	Ongoing

Parks and Gardens

Eastbourne takes pride in its public spaces facilities and standards. The Council's Parks Grounds Maintenance contract is performance based but takes account of sustainable development by means of a series of specifications which include the requirement that the contractor should compost and re-use organic materials suitable for mulching, has a Duty of Inspection, care of wildlife and protection of flora and fauna, and must undertake works to protect and enhance wildlife habitat.

Policy Statement: The Council will continue to improve its sustainable development of parks, gardens and wild places in the Borough

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure green waste arisings are recycled wherever possible	Parks and Gardens Manager	Ongoing
Continue to protect and wildlife habitat	Parks and Gardens Manager	Ongoing

Highways - Verges and Tree Management

All the grass verges alongside the Highways within the Borough are mown 16 times per year under a contract managed by the Council. Tree management within the Borough is designed to provide a sustained amenity that enhances the appearance of Eastbourne. There is an estimated 4500 trees growing in the streets.

Policy Statement: The Council will ensure regular grass cutting of verges is undertaken and will protect street trees. There will be a presumption against the removal of street

trees unless justifiable on grounds of Health and Safety

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Actively develop external funding partnerships for the phased replacement of lost street trees and new planting of street trees throughout the Borough	Arboricultural Officer	Ongoing
Actively seek opportunities to integrate trees into highways improvement schemes	Arboricultural Officer	Ongoing

PLANNING MANAGEMENT

The Borough Council Planning Division is divided into four sections: Development Planning, Development Control, Building Control, and Support Services which provides administration and clerical support.

Development Planning

Development Planning is responsible for producing the local development plan (or land development framework), providing advice on planning policy and historic buildings, and providing planning information. The local development plan sets the framework policy for development control decisions which should reflect the principles of sustainable development.

Policy Statement: The Council will take account of environmental, economic and social considerations in the production and/or revision of the local development plan, when providing advice on planning policy or providing planning information

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure the principles of sustainable development are the basis of the local development plan or equivalent exercise and that environmental considerations take equal place with economic and social considerations	Development Planning Manager	Ongoing

Development Control

Development Control processes planning and other applications under the Town and Country Planning Acts and any related enforcement matters. The management of tree preservation powers and planning searches are also dealt with in this department.

The Town and Country Planning System is designed to regulate the development of land in the public interest. The system seeks to accommodate homes, employment and community uses whilst protecting and enhancing the environment.

Policy Statement: The Council will manage planning for the social and economic needs of the Borough whilst protecting and enhancing the physical environment

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure the principles of sustainable development are the basis of all Council planning decisions	Development Control Manager	Ongoing

Building Control

Building Control enforces the Building Regulations pursuant to the Building Act 1984 and other related legislation. Building Regulations set minimum standards of health, safety and convenience requirements for new and altered buildings.

Policy Statement: The Council will ensure building works in the Borough conform with the Building Regulations contained in the Building Act 1984 and other related legislation

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure measures for the conservation of fuel and energy are employed in building works	Building Control Manager	Ongoing

PROCUREMENT

Presently the Council has no sustainability led procurement policy. Rules for the purchase of works, goods and services are laid down in Eastbourne Borough Council's Constitution Part 4 - Rules of Procedure, Section 12, but are finance biased and do not take account of the principles sustainable development.

Policy Statement: The Council will ensure that the principles of sustainable

development are applied to purchases of all works, goods and services

Future Action:	Responsibility	Timescale
Produce a Council procurement strategy based upon the principles of sustainable development		2002/2003

EBC Environmental Co-ordinator

January 2003